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NEWS RELEASE

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Thomas C. McClenaghan, Special Agent-in-Charge, announced this morning that late last night agents from the Albuquerque FBI Joint Terrorism Task force and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Investigations arrested 10 special interest illegal aliens. The arrests were made pursuant to an ongoing investigation into an illegal alien smuggling operation wherein fraudulent identification documents were produced and utilized to obtain authentic New Mexico Drivers Licenses.

This case was initiated several weeks ago when an alert New Mexico Department of Motor Vehicle employee reported to the Albuquerque Police Department what the DMV employee believed to be a fraudulent attempt to obtain a New Mexico Drivers License. The Albuquerque Police Department immediately alerted the FBI through their representative on the local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). JTTF and ICE agents immediately began investigating and developed information indicating that several individuals in New Mexico were facilitating the travel of special interest illegal aliens from other states within the U.S. to New Mexico. Fraudulent identification and other proof of residence documents were then fabricated allowing the illegals to obtain authentic New Mexico driver's licenses. The subjects in New Mexico, illegal aliens themselves, were charging thousands of dollars for this, "service."

The term, "special interest alien," is derived from the alien's country of origin; certain countries are associated with special national security concerns. The specific countries of origin in this case are not being released at this time. Multiple Federal search warrants were executed in conjunction with this case and agents have seized computers, other electronic media, and an extensive collection of fraudulent documents. While the full scope of this illegal alien smuggling

ring is still under investigation authorities believe at least dozens of special interest illegal aliens were able to obtain New Mexico drivers licenses over the last several months.

Senior New Mexico law enforcement authorities are applauding this effort as an example of how local, state and federal authorities should be working together to rapidly address national security and terrorism threats. Agents and officers from the FBI, ICE, the New Mexico State Police, and the Albuquerque Police Department reacted very quickly in this case. An alert DMV employee saw something suspicious and called their local police, they in turn, because of their ongoing participation on the JTTF, immediately knew specifically who to contact within the FBI. A federal investigation was initiated within hours and within a few weeks local, state and federal agents and officers working together were able to address this national security threat and arrest those responsible.